Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Comparing Refusal Patterns between Native speakers of British English (NS) And Non-native speaker Saudi's (NNS) who study in the UK

Musha'al A. AlBugami

Department of English Language & Translation
College of Languages and Translation
King Saud University

Author: Musha'al A. AlBugami

Thesis Title: Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Comparing Refusal Patterns between Native speakers of British English (NS) And Non-native speaker Saudi's (NNS) who study in the UK

Institution: Department of Phonetics and Linguistics, School of Modern Languages, University of Leeds

Degree: MA

Year of award: 2012

Supervisor: Dr. Melinda Whong

KeyWords: Cross-cultural pragmatics, native speakers, non-native speaker politeness, refusal, Speech act

Abstract

The speech act of refusal is an area that has been considered by a variety of researchers. However, to date a specific comparison of native speakers of British English (NS) with nonnative (NNS) Saudi speakers has not been undertaken. This study fills this gap by exploring the similarities and differences in the refusal strategies of British English (NS) and (NNS) Saudis studying in the United Kingdom (UK). For the study, 33 subjects were asked to respond to 10 different scenarios, where they were required to carry out the speech act of refusal, allowing for data collection through a Discourse Completion Test. The resultant data was analysed in terms of semantic formulas and categorised according to the Beebe et al's (1990) refusal taxonomy. The results suggested differences between the two groups in refusal performance. Regret or saying "sorry", accompanied by excuses and explanations were the preferred formula for refusal in both groups, although direct refusal strategies were also relied on by the two groups. This suggests a basis for the application of Brown and Levinson's, (1987), politeness model in terms of universality. The choice of direct refusals for the NNS Saudi's also suggests the influence of British culture in respondents' realizations of refusals in English. From the research, it is suggested that refusal strategies and patterns are greatly influenced by native language and that the amount of time spent by NNS Saudis in the UK has an impact on their refusal strategies. The impact of this is that in order for NNS to develop appropriate pragmatic ability there is a need to recognize the influence of native language on refusal strategies in a second language as well as the experience of speaking with NS speakers. Further work is thus needed to understand the levels of impact of these two areas.

Cite as: AlBugami, M. A. (2005). Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Comparing Refusal Patterns between Native speakers of British English (NS) And Non-native speaker Saudi's (NNS) who study in the UK. Department of Phonetics and Linguistics, School of Modern Languages, University of Leeds (Master Thesis). Retrieved from *Arab World English Journal* (ID Number: 247. November 2019,1- 64 .

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/th.247>